TAMIL LANGUAGE

CONTENTS

1. **The Tamil Language**
Dr. M. Varadarajan 1

2. **Renaissance of Tamil Language**
Thiru M. R. Perumal Mudaliar, M.A., L.T. 7

3. **Tamil Loan Words in other Languages**
Thiru P. Thirugnanasambandhan 12

4. **Tamil Studies in U. S. S. R.**
Dr. T. P. Meenakshisundaram 18

5. **Coinage of New Tamil Words**
Thiru K. Ramalingam, M.A. 20

6. **Geography - A Prime Factor in Ancient Tamil Poetry**
Thiru N. Sanjeevi 29

7. **Half a Century of Tamil Fiction**
Thiru R. Dhandayudham 33

THE TAMIL LANGUAGE

Dr. M. VARADARAJAN
Professor of Tamil, University of Madras.

The Dravidian family

Tamil is the most ancient and the most widely known of the Dravidian family of languages. In the pre-historic times the proto-Dravidian or proto-Tamil language was spoken throughout India. The word Dravida itself is a corrupt form of Tamil (Tamila-Tramila-Travida - Dravida). The Dravidian family now consists of the four literary languages of South India, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam and many non-literary languages spoken by a number of minor tribes in India-Tulu, Kota, Toda, Kodagu, Kolami, Naiki, Parji, Gadba, Konda, Kui, Kuvi, Kurukh, Malto, Brahmi, etc.

Of the literary languages of this family, Tamil enjoys the greatest geographical extension. Besides the state of Tamilnad where about 30 millions speak it, it is spoken by millions of people in Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and other places.

Antiquity

Tamil is more ancient than the other languages of the family in its literary cultivation. The oldest extant literary works of this language, the ancient anthologies called Pattuppattu and Ettuttokai, belong to the period 3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. The earliest grammatical treatise Tolkappiyam also belongs to this period and bears evidence to the high literary tradition that existed before the compilation of the work. The author Tolkappiyanar refers, in a number of places, to the literary usages and the grammatical traditions established long before his period. Many grammatical works were compiled before Tolkappiyanar and he has duly acknowledged the traditions enunciated in them.

Classification of words

Even at this early stage, Tamil had developed its own metres and poetical works. So the language consisted of a large number

of words which were used in daily speech and a few words which were used only in poetry and ceased to be used in daily speech. Hence we find in the grammatical works the classification of words as 'iyarcol' (ordinary or natural words) and 'tiricol' (poetical or twisted words). Two more kinds of words were added to these; 1. tic-aiccol or words of other regions i.e. words borrowed from dialects and other languages, 2. vatacol, i.e. words borrowed from Sanskrit. Tol-kappiyanar has also indicated that the words borrowed from Sanskrit should be adapted to the phonetic system of Tamil. There are such Sanskrit words in the ancient literary works known as Sangham literature, but they are very few. It is only later on when the Jain, Buddhist, Saiva and Vaishnava religious schools were most active and influential in Tamilnad (7th century to 12th century A.D.) that a greater number of Sanskrit words were introduced into Tamil. They were divided, according to the degree of corruption to which they were subjected, into the two classes, tatsama and tadbhava. The words of the former class were identical with their originals in Sanskrit and those of the latter were much changed to suit the needs of the Tamil phonetic system. The religious and philosophical works in Tamil contained a greater number of tadbhavas whereas the literary works tried to avoid them as far as possible and the Sanskrit words in them were only 5 to 7 per cent.

The literary and spoken languages :

The early Tamil grammarians studied not only the literary language but also the spoken language. The literary or standard language of prose and poetry was called 'Centamil' and the dialects of the spoken language as 'kotuntamil'. Because of the importance of Madurai as the capital of the Pandiya country and as the seat of learning that attracted scholars from the different parts of Tamilnad the dialect of the region of Madurai was believed to be 'centamil' and the dialects of the other regions were considered to be 'kotun-tamil'; but it is not correct. The two terms denoted only the standard literary Tamil mostly approved by the scholars at Madurai and the colloquial Tamil spoken by the poeple throughout the country. Anyhow it is evident that there was a gulf between the spoken language and the ritten standard language even at that early period and that the scholars developed a polished language for their writing and called it refined Tamil or Centamil.

Phonology

Twelve vowels and eighteen consonants are recognised by the grammarians. The vowels are a, a, i, i, u, u, e, e, ai, o, o and

au. Of these ai and au are dipthongs. The consonants are k, n, c, n, t, n, t, n, p, m, y, r, l, v, l, l, r and n. These consist of plosives, nasals, fricatives and laterals. A shorter u, a shorter i and aytam were the three other sounds noted by them. Aytam is a peculiar sound mostly used for softening the plosives in the last syllables of words. Only some consonants occurred initially and combined only with certain vowels. So also there were restrictions regarding the final consonants and consonant-clusters.

Long vowels are treated as single vowels with dobled duration whereas long consonants are considered to be two separate consonants each.

The dipthongs ai and au do not have such an important place in Tamil as they have in Indo-European languages. They may also be taken as vowel clusters ai and au and easily replaced by ay and av in prose as well as in verse. The dipthong an may be said to have not taken deeper roots in Tamil. Vowel clusters occur more in verse and are known as 'Uyir-alapetai.'

The vowels i, i, e and e are rarely used as intitials in modern spoken Tamil. Though they are used in written Tamil as initials, they are pronounced as yi, yi, ye, and ye. The distinction between n and n is there in written Tamil but not in spoken Tamil. Similarly r is not distinguished from r in spoken Tamil except when lengthened. Some of these tendencies are traceable even in the inscriptions.

In course of time, restrictions regarding the initial, medial and final consonants came to be relaxed and therefore Pavananti, the author of the grammatical work Nannul of the twelfth century, is found to differ much from Tolkappiyanar. In modern journalistic Tamil, these restriction have almost disappeared.

The intervocalic glides v and y (utampatu mey) came to be frequently used in Sangham literature and became essential during the age of mediaeval literature. Vowel clusters (uyir-alapetai) which were frequent in early Tamil came to be avoided or rarely used in later days.

Morphology

The Tamil words are of four kinds, viz., nouns, verbs, itaiccol and uriccol. The first two are the most important parts of speech. Itaiccol are empty words used to express shades of meaning and consist of particles and clitics. Roots of obsolete words are considered as a class and called 'uriccol'.

There is no separate class of words as adjectives. Many nouns are used as adejectives, just by being placed before the qualified nouns. The root morphemes of abstract nouns are used

as adjectives. The adjective need not agree with the noun in gender and number; it has neither gender nor number. When such a noun takes the personal suffix it ceases to be an adjective. Among verbs, the relative participles are used as adjectives. They are formed of verbal base and tense marker with or without the adjectival suffix a. When the personal suffix is added to such a participle, it becomes a finite verb or a participial noun and ceases to be used as an adjective.

The verbal participles are used as adverbs. Some of the nouns also serve as adverbs. The verbal participle meaning 'to become' or 'become' is added to those nouns to enable them to serve as adverbs in modern Tamil.

nanku ceytan - he did it well : old Tamil

nanrakac - ceytan - he did it well : modern Tamil

There is an appreciable regularity in the usage of the demostrative bases a and i and the interrogative base e in the Dravidian languages. There are numerous adjectives and adverbs denoting time, place, manner etc. formed of these demostrative and interrogative bases. The demonstrative base u found in old Tamil is not used now.

There is a separate group of echo words in Tamil as in the other Dravidian languages. Their paradigm is identical with that of the words they echo. They cannot function by themselves. The first syllable of the first word is changed to ki or ki to form the echo word (pattu kittu, pampu kimpu).

Nouns

The noun in Tamil is inflected for person, gender, number and case. Numerals and pronouns are also inflected similarly. There are three persons and the pronouns of the first person plural are of two kinds inclusive and exclusive, i.e., first person plural which includes the person or persons addressed and that which excludes them. The oblique forms of the pronouns take case-markers.

The markers of the third case indicated the instrumental as well as the social, but in later days a tendency developed to distinguish between them with separate case-marker for each of them. The case-markers were used more frequently in later periods. Besides them, certain words tend to serve the purpose of indicating the several cases and are called 'collurupu' and are popular in modern Tamil (e.g. kontu for the instrumental and utaiya for the genitive).

Inclitics or particles called cariyai are added to many nouns when they are declined. The same case-markers are added to the singular and plural nouns. There is an exception in the genitive case when atu or a is added as casemarker.

The gender of the nouns in Tamil is based on the meaning of the words, not on the form of the words, nor on blind usage. The human beings and gods are classified as rational or higher gender (uyartinai) and other animate beings and inanimate objects and abstract notions as irrational or lower gender (al-tinai). Thus the lexical meaning is important in deciding the gender, not the endings or forms of words.

Numbers are two, the singular and the plural. There is no dual. In the case of nouns of higher gender, the plural-markers are suffixed to them. But in the case of nouns of lower gender, they are not obligatory. Often the plural markers are absent and only the context determines the number of the nouns of lower gender. (Puttakam vankinar : he bought a book or books). But the plural suffix 'kal' is being regularly added in modern writing though it is sparingly used in speech.

Verbs

The verb denotes the grammatical categories, tense, mood and voice. Most of the finite verbs indicate gender, number and person by means of the suffixes added to them. These suffixes are the same as the pronominal endings affixed to the nouns. There are some finite verbs which do not have these terminations and so do not indicate the gender and number (varum : it will come, those will come ; also he will come and she will come in old Tamil). This class of verbs indicates the existence of the finite verbs without pronominal endings in the earliest stage of growth of the language.

The basic tenses in old Tamil were two, viz., past and non-past. They are three in mediaeval and modern Tamil viz., past, present and future. To denote additional tenses and sequences of tenses, particles and auxiliary verbs are added. Such auxiliary verbs are found to increase in modern Tamil. In old Tamil of the Sangham age, the present tense forms were not developed and the future and the present tenses had common tense-markers.

Generally the verbal root is used as the imperative singular. The imperative plural has as its suffix the pronominal ending of the second person plural. The reflexive, completive and subjunctive verbs are formed by adding auxiliaries or independent words to the main verbs.

The causal forms of verbs are peculiar to the Dravidian languages. By adding certain particles, the verbs are changed into causals. The optative verbs are in the form of the infinitives or verbal nouns and variatons are very few. Modern Tamil prefers the use of a suffix attum.

The negative is formed by the addition of the negative particle to the verbal base with or without tense marker. The negative verb without tenes marker is timeless in reference and its relation to the timescale depends on the context. In modern Tamil the negative enclitic 'ıl' is not in usage; the finite verb illai is added to the infinitive to denote negation. This analytic tendency is growing popular in modern Tamil.

Tamil has no passive voice, as such. The passive is denoted by an auxiliary verb patu. Sometimes peru and other auxiliaries are used.

Auxiliaries, etc.

Auxiliaries are used in Tamil not only for denoting voices and moods but also for suggesting various shades of meanings. They are gradually increasing in number in modern Tamil.

New suffixes like karan, kari and karar are also becoming more and more popular (vittukkaran, kiraikkari, palkarar).

Nouns are derived from verbs. Verbal nouns and participial nouns are of importance. The former denote action and suffixes are added to change the verbs into verbal nouns. There are also verbal nouns without suffixes. In modern Tamil, especially in the spoken language, verbal nouns with tense - markers are in frequent usage. (ceyal, ceytal, ceytatu, ceykinratu, ceyvatu).

The participial nouns denote not the action, but the doer. They are formed by adding pronominal suffixes to the participles. In old and mediaeval Tamil, every finite verb with pronominal suffix was capable of being used as a participial noun. In modern Tamil participial nouns are differentiated from finite verbs by the addition of the particle a (vantan, vantavan).

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RENAISSANCE OF TAMIL LANGUAGE

Thiru. M. R. PERUMAL MUDALIAR, M.A.,L.T.,
Director of Tamil Development, Secretariat, Madras.

The study of the Engilish language and the contact with the industrialised and technological society of the west have had profound effects on the life and thought of the peoples of India. Apart from the innate urge of the people for freedom, which may lie dormant for a time but can never be suppressed for very long, the study of the English language and the contact with Western ideas had the effect of making the intelligentsia of India yearn for the freedom of thought and action which the political and social organisation of the west, especially of the United Kingdom, granted to the people. It was no wonder, thefore, (the freedom movement that India launched in the Indian National Congress emerged exactly half a century after the "famous" minute of Macaulay. The movement for political freedom which began in a very modest and moderate manner with the English-educated Indians asking for a share in the governance of the country was converted into a mass movement by Gandhiji, the wizard who made heroes ef the illiterate and hapless masses of India. The urge for political freedom naturally led the leaders of the freedom movement to think of the ancient and many-splendoured glory of India which they held up as an inspiration to the common people. Cultural renaissance was a natural consequence of political resurgence.

In this short articel I am concerned with the renaissance of the Tamil language and not with the renaissance in other spheres of Indian culture. It was but natural that the poets of India should sing of the values of freedom and of the degrading effects of political subjugation. The songs of Tagore and Subramanya Bharathi set afoot new trends in the literary field. I am not concerned here with Tagore's contribution to modern Bengali language and literature which is well known. My business now is to write about the contribution of poet Bharathi to Tamil language and literature.

Bharathi set new trends in literature not only by the new themes that he chose for his poetry but also by the wonderful diction that he adopted. The words he chose were simple and easily understandable while at the same time they were literary and beautiful. His aim was to write poetry for the masses, unlike the poetry of his predecessors which only Pandits could understand. Just as he desired that the masses should have a voice in the governance of the country so also he wanted that they should have a share in the enjoyment of ennobling literature which until then was the privilage of the Pandits alone. Of course, there were the handful of English - educated people who had their Shakespeare and Milton. Bharathi was not very much concerned with them except in drawing their attention to Valluvan and Kamban and Ilango and a host of other poets and mocking at them for their lack of love for their own heritage.

The themes of the predecessors of Bharathi were traditional and hackneyed. They were of course wounderful poets. But they revelled in the same type of themes and tried to excel one another in the brilliance of their imagery and the difficulty of the diction and metre. If one poet wrote a Kovai or Pillaithamizh, another poet would write another Kovai or Pillaithamizh and try to show off his erudition and his capacity to write poetry. Here is a sample :

மாதிரங் காதல் மனைவாழ்க்கை
    யென்றெண்ணி வான்பொருட்காய்
மாதிரங் காதம் பலவனை வீரின்னும்
    மைந்தனென்றோர்
மாதிரங் காத படிவணங் கீரரி
    மாவொடுமைம்
மாதிரங் காதமர் செய்கின்ற
    சேடன் மலையினையே.

It is not easy for non-Pandits to imagine how much the Pandits would enjoy this poem. But, read the following verses of Bharathi :

தண்ணீர்விட் டோவளர்த்தோம்
    சர்வேசா இப்பயிரைக்
கண்ணீரால் காத்தோம்
    கருகத் திருவுளமோ ?
ஓரா யிரவருடம்
    ஓய்ந்து கிடந்தபின்னர்
வாராது போலவந்த
    மாமணியைத் தோற்போமோ ?
எண்ணமெல்லாம் நெய்யாக
    எம்முயிரின் உள்வளர்ந்த
வண்ணவிளக் கிஃது
    மடியத் திருவுளமோ ?

Any man with a very modest knowledge of Tamil can understand and enjoy these verses. What is more, he can get into the mood of the po t and raise himself to noble heights.

Desikavinayakam Pillai and Bharathidasan followed in the footsteps of Bharathi and wrote sublime poetry. Bharathidasan marks the highest point so far reached in the new trend set by Bharathi.

There are thousands of people who are today following the trend; but the vast majority of the poems turned out even by the top poets among them cannot stand the test of time, whereas some of the poems written by Bharathi and many of the poems written by Bharathidasan will remain immortal.

One of the greatest blunders committed by many of the so-called poets of today is to think that Bharathi never cared for grammar and metre but thought only of the theme and the diction and the imagery. A modern poet is at perfect liberty to experiment with the metres he chooses and also adopt new techniques in writing poetry. But the experiment must be based on his knowledge and mastery of the old techniques. Otherwise, he may try to write poetry in the scriptless language of nomads; he dare not call himself a poet in Tamil which produced masterpieces like Tirukural and Natrinai two thousand years ago.

I have always been of the opinion that the Tamilian is not going to lose much if new works in poetry are not produced. There is enough Tamil poetry which stands favourable comparison with poetry in any language. The Tamilian will certainly lose his place in the world if Tamil prose is not developed to the extent that life in the modern world demands.

In his attempt to convert the freedom movement into a mass movement Gandhiji gave the regional languages the place of honour due to them. You can't speak to illiterate and semiliterate men and women in an alien language. If your message should reach them you must speak in their own language. It is not possible even for highly educated men to express adequately their thoughts and aspirations in an alien tongue. Leaders of the people were therefore compelled to speak and write in their own mother-tongue. Speech - making in Tamil has reached a height, which probably no other language in India has been able to achieve. The trend begun by Thiru. Vi. Ka, the savant, has reached its pinnacle in the speeches of Anna, the statesman.

There has been a lot of writing in Tamil prose during recent years. The newspapers have done a wonderful job of work in educating the masses and creating an interest in reading. The

periodicals have been mainly responsible in encouraging the writing of short stories and novels. Some of the short stories written in Tamil can stand very favourable comparison with the best short stories in any language But the same cannot be said of the novels. Most of them are insipid narrations and none of them, so far as I know, can claim a place any where near the standard novels in foreign languages. Essays of real merit are conspicuous by their absence. Rarely, very rarely, do we come across essays which can compare , with, say, the essays in Reader's Digest.

One of the adverse effects of the renaissance in Tamil is the deterioration in the standard of Tamil prose. Most of the newspaper men and writers of short stories and novels have had very little grounding in Tamil. They have some knowledge of English and, when they write in Tamil, they think in English and translate into Tamil. The resultant writing is full of flaws and more often than not, alien to the genius of the language. It is in this context that we have nostalgic memories of the sublime prose written by Maraimalai Adigal, the wonderful cadences of Thiru Vi. Ka wafting noble thoughts to us like the gentle south breeze and the simple, yet elegant, prose of U. V. Swaminatha Aiyer. All is notlost yet. We have Dr. M. Varadarajan and a few others who have mastered the art of writing a simple and beautiful prose the lucidity of which is really admirble, Beginners will do well to study their works before evolving a style of their own.

There has been a remarkble renaissance in Tamil in the field of education. Time was when a person could dispense with the study of Tamil after passing the 5th standard. English was the medium of education even in the high school and pupils had the option to study Tamil or any other language as a second language, the first being English. All that has changed now. Tamil is the fiirst language in the school and its study is compulsory ; Tamil is the medium of education in the School and it is becoming the medium of education in the Colleges also. The present ministry is making an earnest attempt in this sphere and I am confident of its success. Only when Tamil becomes the medium of education at all levels and the medium of examination in all competitive examinations can the renaissance in Tamil be said to have attained its zenith. Tamil has already become the language of adminisration except in a few spheres of governmental activity. The difficulties posed by the attempt to adopt Tamil as the official language pale into insignificance when we think of the tremendous work that awaits us in the field of higher education.

In the process of switching over to Tamil as the medium of education, we have to make a few changes in the Language which are absolutely essential. We have to transliterate international technical terms and that would entail a few additions to and alterations in the alphabet. We shall have to develop a style of writing which will not be literary. And it need not be literary. Its only requisite is that it should be an adqueate instrument for expressing modern thoughts not only in the field of humanities but also in science and technology. That is a price we have to pay if we attach importance to the acquisition of knowledge and not to language alone. But, the literary language in all its purity and beauty can grow in its own way and according to its own genius, because Tamil is a compulsory subject of study in school and college and it is taught by people who are very well qualified to teach it.

TAMIL LOAN WORDS IN OTHER LANGUAGES

Prof. P. THIRUGNANASAMBANDHAN

Dravidian languages have had a long and glorious past. It is supposed not without sufficient grounds, to have extended over a considerable region even in North India before the speakers of that language were pushed South with the spread of Aryans in Hindusthan. It is but natural, as it has happened in the history of several languages, that words and even a few grammatical devics are adopted in one language from another as in any other field of human activity like religious practices, social conventions etc. It is common knowledge that Sanskrit has influenced several languages in India including the Dravidian group, though the extent or nature of such influence is always in the nature of give and take. It is therefore but natural that the old Dravidian language too exerted some influence over its neighbours ever since the Pre-Vedic days. Such influence is determined by geographical proximity, commercial activity, migrations of people, social intercourse etc.

'There has been through some 3000 years a gradual approximation of the Aryan speech towards the Dravidian in its system of sounds, in its trend in morphology, in its syntax[1] order of words.'

For example, though the cerebral sound in Sanskrit in its entirety cannot be attributed to the Dravidian influence, yet it can plausibly be maintained that the process of cerebralisation in Sanskrit was accelerated to a considerable extent by its inevitable association with the Dravidian languages from even the Pre-Vedic times.

'The cerebrals do present very characteristic sounds of Dravidian and the more the Aryan language advances, the greater is the increase of cerebrals at the expense of dentals. Here extraneous, probably Dravidian, influence may be assumed.'[2]

The use of the Gerund or Conjunctive Participle in Sanskrit, though Indo-European in origin, is a fertile group in Sanskrit and such extensive use of these in Sanskrit cannot possibly be explained otherwise than by a strong Dravidian influence. Loss of the old

Indo-European prepositions, the abandonment of suffixes of comparison in the New Indo-Aryan, disuse of some of the moods and tenses in Sanskrit are some of the trends in Indo-Aryan morphology that can be attributed to Dravidian influence.

Though the basic vocabulary of Sanskrit is Indo-European a great many of the 'desi' words in Sanskrit and Prakrit and Modern Indo-Aryan which have no equivalents in the other Indo-European languages are probably of Dravidian origin. R. Caldwell, H. Gundert, F. Kittel, T. Burrow and B. Emeneau and others have contributed to our knowledge of Dravidian loan words in Indo-Aryan.

Some of the Dravidian loan words in Sanskrit cited by Prof. T. Burrow which number about 500 are given hereunder.[3] (Skt.= Sanskrit, Ta=Tamil, Ma=Malayalam, Kan=Kannada, Tu= Tulu, Te=Telugu, Kol=Kolarian).

anala (Skt), anal (Ta), anal (Ma), analu (Kan).
ulukhala (Skt), ulakkai (Ta), ulakka (Ma), Olake (Kan).
kathina (Skt), kaTTi (Ta) kadugu (Kan), gatti (Tu), kattidi (Te)
kanana (Skt), kaa, kaan, kaanam, kaanal (Ta), kaavu, kaanal (Ma), kaa (Kan.)
khala (Skt) (granary), kalham (Ta. Ma), kalamu (Tel) kalave (Kol).
candanam (Skt), caanhthu (Ta), caanthu (Ma), saadu (Kan), caadu (Te)
pandita (Skt), PaNTitha (Ta), pandu (Te) pand (Kol).
mala (Skt), maalai (Ta), maala (Ma. Te.) maale (Kan).
mina (Skt), miin (Ta), miin (Kan), Miinu (Te).
mukta (Skt), muththu (Ta), muththu (Ma. Kan. Tu.)
mallika (Skt), mullai (Ta), mulla (Ma), molle (Kan), molla (Te).
mayura (Skt), manjnai, mayil (Ta), mayil (Ma), mairu (Tu).
mahila (Skt), makalh (Tam. Ma.), magalu (Tu).

Dr. Caldwell has set forth certain preconditions for determining the question of Sanskrit words being traceable to Dravidian source, the more important of which are —

(i) When the word is an isolated one in Sanskrit, without a root and without derivatives, but is surrounded in Dravidian languages with collateral, related or derivative words; (ii) when Sanskrit possesses other words expressing the same idea whilst the Dravidian tongues have the one in question alone; (iii) when the word is not found in any of the Indo-European tongues allied to Sanskrit, but is found in every Dravidian dialect ...[4]

Adopting these and other criteria, he has given a list of words in Sanskrit traceable to Dravidian sources.

atavi (Skt) from Dravidian root Ta (to be crowded aTarththi (Ta).

ani (Skt) from Dravidian root 'an' from which Tamil words 'anu', 'ani' etc. are derived.

phala (Skt) from Dravidian 'pazh' to ripen.

Dr. Gundert derives 'naranga' (Skt) from Dravidian 'naar' 'to smell' and 'Sringavera' (Skt) from the Dravidian 'injiveer'.

Prof. B. Emeneau derives Ela[5] (Skt) to 'eelam' (Ta. Ma.) Elakki (Kan.) and Nala (Skt) a proper name from Dravidian 'Nal' meaning 'good' cf. nalla, nannan (Tam.), nal (Kan.), nala (Tul.) and naluvu (Tel.)

Though a large number of words have gone from the Dravidian group to Sanskrit in the Post-Vedic period still quite a few have found their way even in Rig Veda e.g., ulukhala, kunda, danda, mayura etc.

The active period of borrowing was well over before the Christian era. The fact that the Dravidian languages Kurukh, Malto and Brahui are still preserved in North India leads to the assumption that the Dravidian language that was the source of a section of Sanskrit vocabulary was prevalent in the North before it was pushed down gradually.

The widely prevalent phenomenon of anaptyxis in Prakrit words derived from Sanskrit can be attributed to the influence exerted by Dravidian languages, e.g., padma (Skt.) paduma (Pkt.), padumam (Ta); similarly we find doubling of consonants by assimilation, e.g. bharta (Skt), bhatta (Pkt), paTTar (Ta).

Trade between Tamilnad and the Roman empire was carried on in the first or second century A.D. and as a consequence Greek and Latin words for pepper, rice, ginger and peacock derived from Tamil gained currency in those languages. Hebrew words like Tuki, ahalim, karpion etc. are drawn from Tamil tokai, akil and karuppu.

From Pre-historic times onwards the mainland and the innumerable islands between India and Australia have been the scene of migrations, invasions and commercial travels. Cultural and religious contacts followed the purely mercantile relations. In addition to Sanskrit many forms were borrowed by the Indonesian languages from Tamil besides other Indian languages and also by the Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch and English languages.

The script in which the Indonesian inscriptions are written before 760 A.D. is called 'Pallava script' which may have been exported from India by people in the South.

Frequent reference to Agastya, the patron sage of Tamil civilisation point to the Pandyas having had a role to play in the cultural evolution of South East. Similarly the prevalence of the cult of Saivism in Campa, Cambodia and Indonesia points to the same conclusion.

In an inscription dating from the old Javanese period a series of names of people occur, viz,, cwalika (Chola), Malayala and Karnnake (Karnataka). Among the sub-tribes of the Karo-Batak tribe we find the names Colia, Pandiya, Meliyala and Palawi, clearly reminiscent of similar names in South Indian history.

R O. Winstedt in his article on 'Indian influence in the Malay worl'd[6] says that more than a thousand years after the arrival of Indian colonists in Malay, there were still Tamils, now Muslims, marrying into the families of the Sultans and Ministers of fifteenth century Malacca.

Tamil loan words are phonologically integrated into the Malay structure. Several of them are connected with items of every day life.

Example:—appaa: bakak; akkaa: kakak; maami: mami; koyil: kuyil; kulham: kolam; maalai: male; paakkam: pekam; veti: bedil; venTai: bendi.

Articles of trade like 'mutu' (pearl), 'wairam' (diamond), 'inja' (ginger), 'kedalai' (bengal gram) 'mangga' (mango) are part of Indonesian vocabulary.

The following Indonesian words with Tamil equivalents given in brackets are a few of the numerous ones absorbed from Tamil.

badai (vaaTai); belanggu (vilanku); tchărpu (ceruppu); kanji (kanji); kedumik (kuTumi); taer (thayir); wepalai (veppilai)

It is no wonder that the Malays who for centuries had commercial contacts with the Tamils had come or use even in the old Javanese compositions terms like 'cameti' (whip): sammaTTi in Tamil and 'panay' (pot); paanai in Tamil.

According to Mr. J. Gonda 'a limited number of literary texts was translated from the richest of all Dravidian literatures into Malay, and the number of Tamil words, which irrespective of their origin, found their way into Malay, amounts to about 105.[7]

Apart from Tamil words, Tamilised Sanskrit words with suitable modifications like 'idam' (Skt. hita), gembala (Skt. gopala), gurindam (Skt. grantha), 'Wedam', 'ragam' etc. entered into

Malay vocabulary. Malayan 'pualam,' 'malai' and 'mempelam' are only variants of Tamil 'pavazham', 'malai' and 'maampazham'.

The old Javanese 'caweli' (article of dress) called 'caul' in Malay is traceable to Tamil 'cavulhi' (cloth) which derives its name to what was an important sea-port in Konkan in the West coast of India famous for its fine embroidered quilts.

S. K. Bulich, the Russian Professor of Comparative and Slavic Linguistics observes, 'The alphabet used for the representation of Philippine languages, especially Tagalog is of Indian origin ......These characters are similar in form to Dravidian.[8]

One of the indirect proofs of the ancient relations between Tamils and Filipinos is the name of Manila City, a Tamil name associated with the land of 'maNilaa' (groundnut).

Among the probable Tamil words in Philippines we may notice a few kapal (ship), kuda (horse), malunggay (drumstick), putu (rice cake) etc.

With the advent of Muslim rule in South India not only did some Tamil words creep into Urdu but even the syntax was affected to a certain extent.

Words like 'Bandi' (cart) and its parts like 'neutarki,' 'poot,' kadakuchchi,' 'eral,' 'achchi,' 'kadani,' etc. have found a place in spoken Urdu in Tamilnad. 'Angar ka dabba' in South Indian Urdu is but a faithful translation of 'thiippeTTi' in Tamil, the North Indian form being 'salai'.[9]

The Tamil suffix 'ku' is used in South Indian Urdu 'myjh-ku,' 'tum ku,' etc. on the analogy of the Tamil words enakku, unakku etc.

'Ham Jake ate hain' we find the influence of the Tamil idiom (Naan poy varukireen) as distinct from the North Indian usage 'Ham calte hain' (I go).

Tamil words became known to Europeans from the 16th century. The following are some of the words in English language which have their source in the Dravidian. The period when they got into English mostly through Portuguese are indicated within brackets. Betel (1553), coir (1582), mango (1582), cepra (1584) coolie (1598), pariah (1613), catamaran (1697), curry (1747). The corresponding Portuguese words are betele, cairo, manga, copra, cule, paria, catamaram and caril. For a fuller study of Tamil loan words in English, the attention of readers is invited to 'A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles' Ed. A. H. Murray and 'Indian words in English' by G. Subba Rao, printed at the Clarendon Press, Oxford in 1928 and 1954 respectively.

Among possible loan words in Portuguese from Tamil, the following words may be cited : Tamil source words are given in brackets.

Apa (appam) ; avel (aval) ; balala (velhlhaalha) ; canakapole (kaNakkappilhlhai) ; comil (kovil).

Tamil words are found in the Portuguese of Ceylon. Among these Dalgado, the lexicographer cites chippi, chunambo, cuda, pete, tortil etc. the Tamil equivalents being cippi, CuNNaambu, kuuTai, peTTi and toTTil. In the reverse process Portuguese words like mestre, mesa, armario, padre, chave, janela and ananas have gained currency in Tamil mesthiri, mecai, alamaari, paathiri, caavi, cannal and annaaci. For further information on the Portuguese impact on Tamil the attention of the readers is invited to Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Sixtyfirst birthday Commemoration Volume 1961 published by Annamalai University, Annamalainagar.

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TAMIL STUDIES IN U.S.S.R

Dr. T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAM
Vice-Chancellor, Madurai University.

There is a group of scholars working on the various aspects of Tamil studies at the Moscow University and at the academy of science. A Dictionary of Russian to Tamil and Tamil to Russian had been published along with a note on the grammer of Tamil language, They have a project to publish the historical grammer of Tamil and a few articles had aready been published. Another group of scholars are engaged in deciphering Mohanjadaro script with the help of the computors and this indeed an interesting study. At the Leningrad University Mr. Ruddlin, popularly called Sembian in Tamil is teaching Tamil to a few students who are anxious to learn the language.

At both the Universities there are Tamil manuscripts. There is also a Tamil manuscript in the public library of Erivon, the capital of the Armenian Republic U.S.S.R. If photostat copies of these manuscripts are sent to the Universities in Tamilnad a detailed study of these manuscripts could easily be made.

There are the progressive printers to translate valuable works into Russian from various languages in the world. They have printed a translation of *Silappatikaram*, *Tirukkural* and *Alai Osai* of *Kalki*. Half a million copies of *Tirukkural* were sold within a week of its publication. That shows the keen interest taken in that book by the Russian readers.

This year Turkministan as a part of the programme to celebrate Indo - Soviet Cultural Relationship organised a Ten Days Tamil Festival at its capital Ashkabad. Indian films, Indian songs and Indian dances were very much appreciated and there was an exhibition of the Arts and Crafts of Tamil land. I had the oppportunity of leading a delegation from India consisting of

Thiru Kannadasan, Thiru M. Viswanathan, film music director and Thiru Ambikapathy of the Mannargudi Municipality along with myself. We were welcomed at the Municipalites, at the Factories, at the State Farms and Collective Farms all over the State and we felt we were amongst intimate friends.

I hope this friendship will grow from strength to strength on the basis of intimate contact and understanding of the languages and cultures.

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COINAGE OF NEW TAMIL WORDS

Thiru K. RAMALINGAM, M.A.,
Member, Official Language Committee, Government of Madras

1. Need for coinage

(a) In any language, there is need today for coining new words. The need is increasing from day to day, since knowledge about men and matters is rapidly advancing and difficulty is confronted to express the same in the words already in use in the language.

(b) If one language is able to coin new terms to express new ideas, other languages need not sheepishly transliterate the words with the help of their own letters or with letters borrowed from other languages. A developed language like Tamil, especially, need not do so. Such an act would reduce the beauty of the language and its individuality.

(c) A transliterated term will sound, generally, ridiculous and cannot be a substitute for a word coined in the language itself; for instance if we have to write 'Lunch Home' in Tamil, it would not do if we write 'லஞ்ச் ஹோம்'. In writing 'Lunch' as 'லஞ்ச்' We have to, in the first place, sacrifice Tamil grammatical conventions. When writiten as per that convention it would be 'இலஞ்சு' and this Tamil term would not correspond it with sound of the term 'Lunch' and would also not mean what 'Lunch' means. In writing 'ஹோம்' we have to borrow a Sanskrit letter 'ஹோ'. Though 'Home' may be expressed properly by 'ஹோம்', it would not make any sense in Tamil.

(d) Similary 'Boarding and Lodging' when written in Tamil as 'போர்டிங் & லாட்ஜிங்', would be alien and cannot become a Tamil equivalent of the English terms. 'உணவு விடுதி, தங்கு வசதி', its correct Tamil equivalent, when it has to be written in English, should be 'Boarding and Lodging' and not 'Unavu Viduthi, Thangu Vasathi'. A mere transliteration of the Tamil terms in English cannot become English and would not serve the purpose for which it is written.

(e) There is immediate necessity at the present moment to coin new terms in Tamil to express official matters which were hitherto written in English. In pursuance of a provision made in the Indian Constitution Act passed in 1950 by the Constitution Assembly formed for the purpose of framing a Constitution for India after the country attained Independance in August 1947, the Legislature of the Government of Madras passed an Act in 1956 making Tamil as the Official Language of the Madras State.

(f) From January 1958 Tamil has been introduced as the language of administration and the sphere of its use gradually enlarged till date, replacing English in all administrative spheres. Arrangements for introduction of Tamil in Law Courts are also on the way.

(g) The Medium of instruction in High Schools in the State is mostly Tamil and colleges are graduallv switching over to Tamil meduim. Science subjects have also begun to be taught in Tamil. It has been laid down in the Indian Constitution that the regional languages in the States should eventually take the place of English in the entire educational sphere.

(h) In the circumstance, it is obvious that a vigorous and rapid attempt has to be made to coin suitable Tamil terms to replacc the English ones which have been in vogue till recently.

2. Material for Coinage

(a) Tamils are an ancient people. They ruled themselves and had excellent administrative machinery and efflcient Government as found in chapters relating to administrative matters in 'Thirukkural'. The Tamils were a seafaring nation and were trading with Rome and Greece in ancient days, when those countries were great. They knew sea warfare. It can be said that they had scientific knowladge regarding these matters. Tamil words such as 'ஞாலம்', 'ஞாயிறு' and 'கோள்' indicate that they were well versed in astronomy.

(b) Tamil as a spoken language is older than Greek or Latin. The Sanskrit language came into existence in 1500 B.C. says Sunit Kumar Chatterji of Bengal though some other scholars put its origin as 1000 B.C. But it is not known when the Tamil Language was formed. Research scholars say that Tamil was the first language spoken by man.

(c) The oldest book extant in Tamil is agreed by scholars to have been writen about 3000 years ago. It is 'Tholkappiam' and it contains not only the grammar of the language but also the way of life of the Tamils in ancient times. It makes us understand that

there were several grammatical works prior to it, indicating thereby that literary works in Tamil existed several hundreds of years before these grammars were written, since the rule in Tamil is that literature precedes grammar.

(d) Though much of the literary works in Tamil have been lost due to various causes, still there are a good number written works more than 2000 year back available to us now. Subsquent literature running to the present times is also voluminous.

(e) There are thousands of Tamil inscriptions transcribed on stone and on copper plates strewn all over the Tamil country and they are 1000 years old and more. There were grants by Rulers of those days and contain very many administrative terms which can aptly be adopted for the English terms. Government have taken copies of most of them and a good number has been printed too.

(f) Being an ancient people with a hoary past the Tamils have not lost even to this day the instinctive capacity to find out suitable Tamil terms for foreign ones (if they only put their mind to it.) Once an illiterate village associate of mine was able to give out in a trice a very appropriate Tamil equivalent namely 'புதை வடிகால்' for 'Underground Drainage', while I was at my wits end to explain to him in Tamil that the presence of mosquitoes in a part of Madras was due to want of underground drainage for that area.

(g) There are several Tamil words in use in the nooks and corners of Tamil Nad which have not got into the existing Tamil books and which the present educated Tamilian may not have come across but which would fit in as appopriate equivalents for many a foreign terms. A colleetion of all such terms has yet to be done and it would contribute a fair extent in the attempt of coinage of new Tamil terms.

3. Principles of Coinage

In coining new words in Tamil certain principles have to be observed to make the coined words stay and for them to be of good service. These principles may be enumerated as follws in the order of importance.

The coined word,

(i) Should have Tamil roots for its formation,
(ii) Should be appropriate to the idea to be conveyed by it.
(iii) Should be such as would be easily made out by the average person who has to use it,
(iv) Should be as short in form as possible,

(v) Should be facile to pronounce and pleasing to the ear.

Let us examine these principles one by one and find out how they are important.

i. The coined word should have Tamil roots for its formation.

(a) The Tamil language has got a distinct sound effect. As a matter of fact every language has got its own similar distinction but Tamil is peculiarly different from all other languages. The word 'Tamil' means 'sweetness' and the great poet Bharathi felt the pleasantness of honey flowing into him through his ears when he expressed even the mere name of the land where Tamil was the spoken tongue. He has further exclaimed that he could not find any other language so sweet as Tamil, though he was well-versed in Sanskrit, English and a few other languages too.

This sound effect will be spoiled if roots alien to the language are brought in to form new Tamil words and the individuality of the language will also be marred thereby.

(b) Tamil language affords immense possibilities to choose roots from it for any new idea, it being an ancient classical language with superior literature in live use even today. Not to make an attempt to seek out the roots from the various sources available in Tamil, for forming new words, would be a disservice done to the language and a disregard flung at its richness. Without being conscious of the fertile nature of the language and without bestowing sufficient effort to search out Tamil roots, foreign terms should not be gone in for, to the detriment of the great name of the Tamil language.

(c) If other than Tamil roots are used for coinage, the new words would be like dead pieces and would not allow themselves to be utilised for the development of further words from them and thereby they would fail to enrich the language. In the interest of the development and growth of the language, coined words should have their roots chosen from Tamil.

(d) The free and continuous use of alien roots would in the long run change the form and nature of the language and the language used at one period of history would become unintelligible at a subsequent period. This indiscriminate and liberal use of foreign terms in the English language about 1500 years ago has been one of the causes for making what is called old English, ununderstandable after 500 years i.e. during 1000 A.D. when Middle English was the language in use. Middle English became unintelligible at the Chaucerian period. Again, Chaucer's language is found to be different from the languages of the previous and

subsequent periods; but all the four are called by the same name 'English'. Modern English however takes care to coin new words generally from the roots which have become its own as could be seen from the words, 'know-how'; 'Tie ups', 'run-way', 'Zeep' etc. and therefore could easily be made out by the English speakers at any time even in the distant future.

A vigilant following of this principle in coining new terms in Tamil is necessary to keep the language chaste. The prevalence of the term 'கன்னித் தமிழ்' inculcates that this rule should be strictly adhered to preserve the language in its prestine purity.

(e) There is another danger in engaging foreign roots for the formation of new Tamil terms. The language itself would get brokenup into a number of different languages. This has actually happened in the past. What was one language, we may call it Tamil, at one time with different dialects at different areas in Southern India has to split up into four or five languages - Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Thulu and Malayalam - due to the thrusting in of a large number of Sanskrit words in each of the dialects except one which has retained the name Tamil.

The present Tamil language has now got four dialects: The language spoken in Madras and its surrounding districts is a little different from the one in use in Tirunelveli, Madurai and Ramanathapuram district; Tiruchirappalli and Thanjavur have got a different dialect; Coimbatore Salem area has another dialect. These dialectic differences go on increasing and in addition to them putting in of foreign terms would definitely break them up into four different languages requiring different grammars for each in the course of years. This may occur at a very distant future but its occurrence is certain if not guarded against from even now. It is therefore of vital importance to avoid alien roots in coining new words in Tamil.

(f) Within about two to three hundred years of use by us of the English language, an opinion has come to be current that Tamil cannot stand by itself and English is indispensable to it in several spheres. A similar opinion with regard to Sanskrit had gained currency and it was the opinion of even some scholars that Tamil was not sufficient for the needs of the Tamils and Sanskrit had to be invoked for complementing and supplementing the Tamil language and literature. It was also asserted by interested persons that Tamil was not an independent language but was one created from Sanskrit. In fact Tamil is far ancient to Sanskrit and the time of its origin is not ascertainable. It is also to prevent this scandal 'that Tamil cannot stand on its own legs', that Tamil roots

have to be scruplously sought for, for coining new words in that language.

(g) Every rule has got an exception. If for any reason a Tamil root could not be easily got at and the need for a new words is urgent, a foreign root or term can be adopted for coining a new Tamil word and the vigorous attempt continued to seek out a Tamil term to replace the foreign one at a very early date. The day to day work in any field need not suffer on account of our inability to trace out or form a Tamil term immediately.

In adopting a foreign term care should be taken to give it a Tamil shape and sound observing the Tamil grammatical conventions therefor.

(h) Those who do not understand these implications and those who purposely want to disregard them for their own reasons, snub the followers of this principles lightly as 'purists'. Such a characterisation should not deter any body from observing this principle in coining new Tamil words as this is a supreme matter affecting the sacred heritage of the entire Tamil people of all times.

ii. The coined word should be appropriate to the idea to be conveyed by it.

(a) Next in importance is that the new coinage should bring out as exactly as possible the idea to be expressed by it. If a number of words suggest themselves to us as equivalents for a concept we should use our discretion and select among them the one which conveys the meaning best. Other considerations should not weigh with us in regarding the best word.

(b) The term should also be unambiguous to qualify it to be the best. A literal translation of a foreign word into Tamil may not serve the purpose but its import should be brought out clearly in the translation. Special care has to be bestowed in finding out appropriate terms in Tamil for idioms to be translated from other languages.

iii. The coined word Should be such as could be easily made out by the average person who has to use it.

(a) It is generally expected that a newly coined word should be easily understandable by all who speak the language in which it is coined. This is not possible. One has to bestow some attention and thought to understand new terms. He should have a sufficient knowledge of the Tamil language. All persons who speak English cannot be expected to know, automatically and without effort, all the terms used in that langnage. And when they

want to learn a subject they should take some trouble to know what new terms there are in it and what each such term means. This rule applies with equal force to Tamil and as a matter of fact to any language in the world. A layman cannot be expected to understand at the start a new Tamil word coined for a scientific or an administrative concept.

(b) The principle enunciated here has therefore to be worked out with these reservations. A sincere attempt has to be made to use easy and simple forms and known roots as far as possible. When the idea could be expressed in two ways, the easier form should be adopted. The aim should be to coin the term with all reasonable simplicity consistent with the observance of all the other principles for new coinage enunciated here. Hard and pedantic forms should be avoided.

iv. The coined work should be as short in form as possible.

(a) Tamil language is well known for its brevity of form. It is possible therefore to find out a Tamil equivalent for a foreign expression generally lesser in size than the foreign term. What is wanted for securing a short form is patience and a fair knowledge of Tamil roots.

(b) A short new word would, besides proclaiming the capacity of the language for compressing ideas in a short form, enable the saving of time, space and material for putting them in writing. Even for pronouncing it, less energy and effort would be sufficient; breath is conserved and life is automatically prolonged.

(c) For typing an English matter one stroke on the type-writing machine is enough for one English letter, whereas Tamil letters like 'தெ', 'மி' 'ழு' etc require two strokes each; 'தொ' needs three strokes. Hence the necessity for coining short words is greater in Tamil than, for instance in English, with a view to lessen the number of strokes and conserve time and energy in typing such words. Speed would be secured in typing when the forms are brief.

(d) It has been found from experience that there is generally 20% saving in space in typing a Tamil translation of a matter from English. When the newly coined terms are short, this saving would not only be kept up but would also increase. When proper attention is not bestowed on brevity of terms, the Tamil translation would become longer and unwarranted blame would be thrown upon the Tamil language.

v. The coined word should be facile to pronounce and pleasing to the ear.

(a) This is an important principle which should not be ignored in coining new Tamil terms. What was explained earlier with regard to the sweet sounding nature of Tamil should be emphasised in this connection. The new term should be such as to be pronounced without much effort. It should be melodius to the ear. Even a person who does not know the Tamil language should be attracted by the pleasing sound of the words.

(b) The greatness of the Tamil language with regard to its sound effect would be affected if Tamil terms are hard to pronounce and harsh to the ear. The musical nature of the tongue could be kept up only by using well chistled out words and an earnest attempt should be made to coin such words in the interest of the dignity of Tamil. The intrinsic genius of the language in this regard should be exploited to the greatest extent.

4. Samples of new coinage.

A few terms at random to serve as examples are given below. The above principles have been generally observed in coining them. If the terms are not upto the mark, the defect is not with the principles enunciated nor with the nature of the Tamil language but with the author who has yet to equip himpelf with a greater skill in applying the principles and with a fuller knowledge of the languge dealt with.

Officer - அலுவலர்
Specialist - தனித்திறலர்
Engineer - பொறிஞர்
Township - நகர்மை
Rubber - தேய்ப்பம்
Calender - காலந்தேர்
Underground drainage - புதை வடிகால்
Convener - ஒருமிப்பவர்
Candidate - நாடுநர்
Extraordinary - பொதுமிகை
Drinking Water tank-உண்குளம்
Motor Horn - உந்துகுழல்
Satisfactory - நிறைமன
Technician - நுட்பர்
Passbook - கடவேடு
Bush - bearing - சுரைதாங்கி
Civic conciousness - ஊர்நல உணர்வு
Magistrate - தண்டனையர்
Commissioner - ஆணையர்
Engineering expert - பொறிவலர்
Secretariat - அமைச்சகம்
Quorum - கோரெண்
Electricity Board - மின் ஆயம்
Administrator - ஆட்சியர்
Resignation - ஒருவல்
Please halt and go - நின்று செல்க
Preference - நயப்பு
Personnel - ஆளினர்
Sound Horn - குழல் ஒலி
Surface water - மீநீர்
Passport - கடவிசைவு
Buffet Dinner - எடுத்துண் விருந்து
Spiral spring bearing - சுருள் வில் தாங்கி

Approval - ஏற்பு
Recognition - அறிந்தேற்பு
Socialistic Democracy - சமவாய்ப்புக் குடியரசு
Imbalance - சமமின்மை
Additional Secretary - இணைச் செயலர்
Deputy Secretary - துணைச் செயலர்
Assistant Secretary - உதவிச் செயலர்
Doctor - மூதறிஞர்
Proof - ஒப்பச்சு; எண்பிப்பு
Pattern - பாணி
Preamble - நோக்குரை
Precedence - முந்துரிமை, முற்சான்று; முன் நிகழ்வு
Block - உருவச்சு
Propaganda - (செய்தி) பரப்பல்
Please do not smoke - புகைக்காதீர்
Officer Oriented - அலுவலர் பொறுப்பு முறை
Provisional arrangement - வகை செய் ஏற்பாடு
Ratification - பின் ஏற்பு
Unit - அலகு
Level crossing - சமதரைக் கடவு
Breakdown - சீர்கேடு; முறிவு
Joint Secretary - பிணைச் செயலர்
Under Secretary - சார் செய்லர்
Associate Secretary - சேர் செயலர்
Mayor - மேயர்
Panel - பட்டிப்பு
True copy - நேர்படி
Portable - எடுப்பு
Fancy article - கவர் பொருள்
Advertisement - விளம்பரம்
Publicity - (செய்தி) விளம்பல்
Orientation training - புத்தறிவுப் பயிற்சி

GEOGRAPHY - A PRIME FACTOR IN ANCIENT TAMIL POETRY

Thiru. N. SANJEEVI,
Department of Tamil, University of Madras.

The earliest Tamil grammar extant is Tolkappiam which is generally considered by research scholars to belong to 4th century B.C. at the latest. The outstanding greatness of this treatise among the ancient grammatical works, is its unique treatment of the subject matter of poetry known as 'Porul'. In the third and final part of this work - Tolkappiyam, which succeeds the first two parts on '*letter*'' and '*word*' respectively, the main theme is human life which is the object (porul) for poetry. Here the author of Tolkappiyam reflects the analytical genius of the ancient Tamils in classifying the human life (not merely Tamil life) into two divisions of love and non-love (the esoteric and exoteric or internal and external) termed *Akam* and *Puram* respectively. The value of this fundamental classification is enhanced by the fact that in *Akam* only love can be the theme, and in Puram all the other subjects can be dealt with. This classification is no paralle to subjective and objective poetry known in the west, as all the subjective themes need not be love and further no love-poem will be recognised as *Akam* poetry, if it bears the slightest identity of any known human character involved in the episode. *Such an impersonal treatment was aimed at to preserve the universality of the noblest of human feelings - Love.*

That the ancient Tamils were deeply immersed in the world of love can easily be discerned from the very apparent fact that out of the *Ten Idylls* and *Eight Anthologies* (Pattuppattu and Ettu-t-thokai) four Idylls and five in full and one in part of anthologies belong to *Akam* (love) poetry. Of the 473 *Sangam* poets 301 have sung only love poems; 77 sung both love and other poems; 95 have sung only non-love themes. Of the 2381 *Sangam* poems 1862 speak of love themes. These figures will reveal the eminence of love theme in *Sangam* poetry. In *fact the very word 'Tamil' meant 'love' in Sangam age.*

Let us now look into the foundations of these love poems. They are nothing but the fundamental factors of geography, because the whole of Sangam poetry is based on a five-fold division of land, namely Kurinchi, Mullai, Palai, Marutham and Neythal which mean respectively the montane or mountainous, the pastoral or forest, the arid or the desert, the riverine or agricultural and the littoral or coastal regions. *Of these five, the old Tamils did not recoggnise Palai (the arid or the desert) as a separate entity, since it is only the result of the reduction of both the mountainous and forest or pastoral region. These five regions are deliberately sung as 'ulagam (world) itself repeatedly by Tolkappiyar. Perhaps to impress the truth that these major divisions are applicable not only to Tamilnad but the whole of the earth to a very great extent.* Tolkappiar might have also meant that each of these five regions is as compact as a world in itself. Here it is interesting to note that the compound word 'Nanilam' (Na-Nilam : four-fold land) means the 'world' even now. The classification of land into these five regions is so important, since the ancient Tamils conceived of ideal love (anbin ainthinai fivefold regional character of love) itself as akin to these divisions of land. According to the Tamils of the classifical age, it is nothing but the nature of the land that primarily infiuenced the life of the people.

The impact of this five-fold classification of land on Sangam Poetry particularly in the compilation of Akananuru is really significant. In that anthology of 400 love-poems we find all odd numbered on *Palai*, all even numbered ending with 2 or 8 in *Kurinchi*, with 4 on *Mullai*, with 6 on *Marutham* and all the rest (i.e. divisible by 10) on Neythai.

Next to this we find the three-fold classification *Mudal*, *Karu* and *Uri* which literally mean the prime or the source, the embryo or the nucleus and the belonging or the possesion respectively. Every one of the above mentioned divisions of five-fold land has this trio as the basis for its literature.

The Mudal or prime consists of the land and time. According to the ancient Tamils the marriage of these two was the source of each and every activity on earth. Without place and time, they were sure, there was no life. Is it not true even to-day?

Further the time is divided into two major divisions — the short and the long. The short are the six divisions of the day known as *Sirupoludu* and the long are the six divisions of the year known as *Perumpoludu*,

The six divisions of the day are as follows :

	Tamil name	*English equivalent*	*Hours of the day*
1.	Vidiyal	early morning	2 A.M. to 6 A.M.

2.	Kalai	morning	6 A.M. to 10 A.M.
3.	Nanpahal	mid-day	10 A.M. to 2 P.M.
4.	Erpadu	after-noon	2 P.M. to 6 P.M.
5.	Malai	evening	6 P.M. to 10 P.M.
6.	Yamam	mid-night	10 P.M. to 2 A.M.

The six divisions cf the year are as follows :

	Tamil naue	*English equivalent*	*months of the year*
1.	Kar	Winter or early rainy season.	Middle of August to middle of October.
2.	Kuthir	Autumn or later rainy season.	Middle of October to middle of December.
3.	Munpani	early winter or early dewy season	Middle of December to middle of February.
4.	Pinpani	late winter or late dewy season	Middle of February to middle of April.
5.	Ilavenil	early spring	Middle of April to middle of June.
6.	Muduvenil	later spring	Middle of June to middle of August.

N.B.—*Roughly the middle of Roman calendar month is the beginning of Tamil month·*

The following are the six *Sirupoludu* and six *Perumpoludu* suited for the love-life in the five regions.

Name of the land	*Name of the Sripoludu*	*Name of the Perumpoludu*
1. Kurinchi or monatne	Mid-night	early winter and early dewy season.
2. Mullai or the pastoral	Evening	Rainy season
3, Palai or arid	Midday	Later spring or summer and Later dewy season.
4. Riverine	Last hours of the night & the drawn	All the six seasons.
5. Neydal or Littoral	After-noon	All the six seasons

Then the Karu or regional features consist of God, food, animal, tree, bird, drum, profession, harp and such other things. In this classification it must be noted as to how the ancient Tamils considered that not only the flora and the fauna as the produce of *Mudal* (land and time) but the man with all his activities and art and even God also as its yields. How daring were the early Tamils not to consider the Imperceptible God but the perceptible land and time as the primary source for all the life on earth ! However some deep thought will convince us of the rationale that without

land and time (day and seasons) there would be no human and other life on earth and that without human things there could be no question of any concept of God by him. Though God has created land, time and every other thing, His glory is in the conception of man about Him. What is the greatness of being great if that greatness is not greatly recognised and revered? It must also be keenly noted that in Tolkappiam the list of things under *Karu* (the produce or factors of environment) begins with God and ends with music !

Then let us move on to the third and final classification known as Uri (love-character). In this we find the excellence of the pragmatic spiritualism of the ancient Tamils, since they have conceived that it is the charcter of the human soul which is its real 'belonging' or 'possession' known as Uri. Based on this fundamental conception they found out, as a result of their long experience and deep reflections, that the mountain and mountainous region is best fitted for love-making and union, that the wood and woody region for endurance (the love-lorn lady patiently waiting during the period of separation for the return of her husband), the desert region for separation the cultivated region for love-quarrel (since the male goes astray due to the affluance caused by the wealth of the farms) and the sea and sea-coast region for yearning in separation.

It is interesting to observe that the divisions of land and seasons which are typical to Tamizhaham as classified by Tolkappiam and as portrayed by Sangam poets have not undergone any change at all and the influence of them on the life of the people can still be realised by the rural folk if not by the urban society.

The early Tamils were deeply conscious of the fundamental factors of geography - land, time and produce raised by them-which according to them moulded the very character of the human soul. The greatness of ancient Tamil literature is that it had this natural geographical consideration as a prime factor both for classification and elucidation particularly of love-poetry.

To realise the basic knowledge of the Tamils regarding the abiding influence of Physical geography on Bio-geography particularly on human geography and the depth of their wonderful awarness of the same the true sons of Nature one has only to revel in the realms of ancient Tamil literature.

HALF A CENTURY OF TAMIL FICTION

Thiru R. DHANDAYUDHAM

While reviewing the major contributions to Tamil fiction during the last fifty years, it is necessary to consider their origin. The first attempt in novel writing was made in 1876, and the second one in 1896; therefter, the efforts were continued only for eight years in fits and starts. Soon after, translations and adaptations of novels from other languages as well as detective fiction began to hold sway. After that, it is only from 1935 that there has been for the past thirty years, a continuous flow of Tamil novels. In this context, it is relevant to consider how far it is proper to compare the growth of Tamil novel with that of its Western counterpart, which has had the advantage of being discovered and developed many hundred years earlier.

It is thought that major writing enriches the literary tradition in a given language, both by treating significant areas of experience and by employing techniques which add to the possibilities of the medium itself. From this point of view, it may be said that *Pratapa Mudaliar Charithram,* which came out in 1876, ushered in a new field of writing in Tamil. The construction of this novel is autobiographical, as if Pratapa Mudaliar himself were narrating the incidents of his own life. Though the novel is loose in stucture, Vedanayakam Pillai has striven to portray the Tamilnad of those times. He has made the novel interesing by weaving into it many sub-plots and anecdotes. After this important initial breakthrough, Rajamier's *Kamalambal Charithiram,* published in 1896, was also an achievement. His characters were taken from daily walks of life—the men and women he actually met with all their faults and foibles as well as their human qualities. It was only in this novel that the concept of a realistic approach had its beginning. Rajamier has pictured the rural life of his time with meticulous competence. In telling the story of a good home being destroyed by jealousy, the author has interwoven his own philosophy of life. These two

authors played a poineering role in the development of Tamil fiction as a distinct form of literary expression.

Among the later novelists Kalki is significant in more ways than one. The publication of his *Kalvanin Kadali* in 1936-37 started a new era in the history of Tamil novels, of which he wrote a large number. Since he considered it his responsibility to develop this new literary form, and to find readers for it, he experimented with form and subject-matter. A notable change he introduced was the adoption of the dramatic technique in the place of the narrative—a technique in which he achieved considerable success.

Among his noteworthy novels are *Kalvanin Kadali, Alai Osai* and *Sivakamiyin Sabatham. Kalvanin Kadali* centres on the life of Muthian and Kalyani, the former turned into a thief and the latter clinging to the memory of Muthian even after she had married another man. To Kalki goes the credit of making a thief the hero of his novel and depicting the ups and downs of bis life with sympathetic understanding. The novel went eloquently against the economic inequalities and the position of women in society, of which the author was only too painfully aware. Another aspect of the novel is its lively style, which is one of the author's praiseworthy contributions to Tamil writing. To suit the background of the story peopled by such living characters as Sangu Pillai, Kalki has used the Tamil dialect in vogue in Tanjavur.

Alai Osai originally appeared, in a serial form, in the *Kalki* magazine during 1948-49. Here too, the author's characteristic craft of building his theme against the background of his country's political history is much in evidence, though this time with a pointed reference to his own days. Many truths emerge when we compare this novel with his earlier *Kalvanin Kadali*. If Tanjavur District, where he was born and brought up, is the background of *Kalvanin Kadali, Alai Osai* has the entire stretch of India as its background. Moreover, *Kalvanin Kadali* has few characters, while *Alai Osai* has more than thirty. Apart from its all-embracing canvas, made possible by the author's variegated experience in his personal life, this second novel is also remarkable for its delineation of characters and convincing portrayal of atmosphere.

In *Alai Osai*, a story about the eternal triangle, the history of the country's struggle is projected as a background. Gandhiji's adoption of non-violence as a means to win back India's freedom, the revolutionary plans of the socialists, and post-Independence Hindu-Muslim riots, Kalki merges them all into the texture of the novel. One notable point is that the atmosphere and characters, without being in conflict, complement each other.

Though the author takes up contemporary life for treatment, the novel retains its quality of literary permanence.

Historical novels constitute yet another of Kalki's major contributions. It is no exaggeration to say that it was he who created historical novels in Tamil. Some episodes of the Pallava and Chola periods have been reconstructed beautifully in these novels, of which the most outstanding is *Sivakamiyin Sabatham*, considered by many as a prose epic.

One cannot regard all of Kalki's novels as masterpieces. Some are artificial as they had to meet the needs of magazines, and to attract readers. Even so he occupies an important place among Tamil novelists as much for the tradition he created as for the wide readership that he built up.

Those who came after Kalkai did not follow him blindly, but carved for themselves new pathways. The most important among them are Devan, Dr. Mu Varadarajanar and Akilan. Devan, like Kalki, was a contributor to magazines, but, a fact to be deeply deplored, none of his novels has come out in book form. His *Mr. Vedantham,* describing the life of a writer, has been justly hailed as a noteworthy achievement. Dr. Mu Va and Akilan, both contemporaries, started writing at about the same time, but in all respects, including the style and content, each has his own distinguishing characteristics.

A successful combination of a thinker, scholar and true artist, Dr. Mu Va has specialised in objective characterization and his narrative technique has a special flavour. Worthy of mention among his novels are *Karithundu, Alli, Agal Vilakku* and *Kayamai*. *Karithundu* presents a painter's life and shows that the slum life in Madras can be dealt with artistically in a novel. *Alli's* principal concern is the problem of sex, which is handled here both scientifically as well as in a polished way. In *Agal Vilakku* the author shows show how easy it is for people gifted with a keen intellect and aesthetic sense to slip into evil ways. *Kayamai*, thematically much different from the previous three, exposes corruption in political and official circles. What is particularly mentionable about this author's writing is his style, which is both simple and beautiful.

In its quality as well as quantity, Akilan's contribution to Tamil fiction is very impressive. He adopts the narrative form as well as the dramatic, and shows a subjective, rather than an objective, outlook. In a way, all his novels are historical, mirroring the period to which they relate. His first novel *Penn* portrays the background of the freedom struggle, *Nenjin Alaigal* is on the Indian National Army and *Vaazhvu Engay* takes up the problem of the

caste-system. He is a writer with a social conscience. However, *Paavai Vilakku* and *Kayal Vizhi* are considered to be his best works, the former being a tragic story of hard work, pure love, inner conflicts and despair, and the latter a historical novel set against the background of Pandya history.

The novelist next to be considered is R. Shanmugasundaram whose novels depicting the life and problems of Coimbatore district have had a substantial success. *Poovum Pinjum, Nagammal* and *Azhiakkolam* are three of his important contributions. Then there is T. Janakiraman, who has also dealt with the problem of sex very attractively, and whose two mentionable novels are *Vuyirthen* and *Mohamull. Vuyirthen* is the story of a rich man who gets tired of his pursuit of wealth and goes to a village in search of peace only to get involved with the problems of the village. *Moha-mull* is about Babu and his love for the ten years older Yamuna. This second novel's theme and treatment make it specially readable, is spite of its slightly loose construction.

Some other novels that may be mentioned in this connection are Shankar Ram's *Mannasai*, Chidambara Subramaniam's *Idayanaadam*, B.S. Ramiah' *Prema Haaram*, Aarvi's *Anaiya Vilakku*, Mayavi's *Ellaikkappal*, Vindan's *Paalum Paavaiyum*, Raghunathan's *Panjum Pasiyum*, Hepsyba Jasudasan's *Putham Veedu*, C. S. Chellappa's *Vaadi Vassal* and Saavi's *Visiri Vaazhai*.

Like the novel, the short story in Tamil is also of recent origin and development. Though it began with V. V. S. Iyer's 'Mangayakarasiyin Kaadal', the writer who achived unique distinction in this field was incontestably Pudumaippithan, unrivalled as much for the variety of his subjects as for the vigour of his style and technique. His ruthless portrayal of reality has often such a touch of beauty that he can be justifiably called a prose poet. His 'Ponnagaram' is the story of a woman who sells herself to earn for her husband's food and survival. 'Sirpiyin Naragam', also a wonderful story, is about a sculptor who makes a beautiful image for a temple, but finding that no one even cares to notice it, destroys the statue and himself. Pudumaippithan's portrayal of the servant-maid in 'Kaanjanai' is so powerful that readers feel perplexed whether she is a woman in flesh and blood or just a spirit in human form. His 'Akhalikai' and 'Siva' establish him as a master in re-interpreting mythological themes. In 'Kadavulum Kandaswamy Pillaiyum', a rare example of humour and pathos and at times biting satire, God appears as an ordinary human being.

If Pudumaippithan reflects courage and manliness, grace is the key-note of Ku-paa Rajagopalan, whose stories deal with intricate situations in social life and family relationships. His 'Vidiyuma', superb in form, feeling and imagination, is about a woman who has received telegraphic information that her husband is seriously ill. The story begins with her agonising journey and ends with her arrival at the destination, where the news of her husband's death is conveyed to her. 'Thai', another important story by Rajagopalan, dramatizes the agony of an unmarried mother.

Some excellent short stories have also been written by novelists like Kalki, Akilan, Dr. Mu Va, B. S. Ramiah and Aarvi. Among living short story writers Jayakanthan is one of the most notable. He deals boldly with hypocrisy, life in slums and similar subjects, which the others are reluctant to touch. 'Pralayam', 'Saathanum Vedam Odattumay', 'Yuga Santhi', 'Oru Pidi Soru' and 'Inippum Karippum', are among his best stories. 'Anbalippu', 'Raja Vandirukkirar', 'Kalyana Krishnan' and 'Azhagammal, deserve special mention among Ku Azhagiriswamy's beautiful stories on ordinary day-to-day life and domestic stuations.

As already, stated it may not be proper to measure the achievement of Tamil fiction with a Western yardstick. We do not have with us experimentalists like Henry James, James Joyce and William Faulkner. But there is no absolute value judgment possible in literature, which ultimately is a product of social conditions and must reflect the realities of a given situation. What is important to note here is that despite mounting obstacles and inexpensive diversions such as sensational magazines, crime fiction and vulgar, popular films, good and serious literature in Tamil continues to be written.